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Finance Committee Minutes 02-10-2003

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7:30 PM Hearing Room, town hall

2/10/03

ATTENDEES:

Janowitz*	Feinleib*	O'Riordan*	O'Neill*	Mahoney*
DeCoursey	Connors*	Simmons*	Morrisette*	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst*	Ronan	
Piandes*	Franclemont*	Jones	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*	Tosi*	Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, and a full room of interested citizens.

GENERAL: The Board of Selectmen Chair, Kathleen Dias, ran the meeting and the hearing that followed. She stated that the meeting was called by the Finance Committee to discuss the budget. The meeting was televised. The Finance Committee Chair, Al Tosti, requested guidance on how to approach the budget review.

Town Manager Nancy Galkowski, using a handout, walked the Finance Committee through her updated revenue and expense estimates leading to a deficit of \$13.1m. Her budget was based on her previous \$8.2m deficit estimate. The Finance Committee received her budget, which includes \$2.9m of reductions. She had reviewed these changes with the Board of Selectmen on Feb. 6.

Superintendent of Schools Kay Donovan, using a handout, explained the \$5.1m in reductions she has proposed to the School Committee. This was also based on the original \$8.2m deficit. She also provided the school budget to the Finance Committee.

The Capital Planning Committee Chair Charlie Foskett passed out a summary of the plan to use the town's reserves and suggested that the town address the 3-year problem. He estimated this would be equivalent to a \$16.8m deficit this year.

Tosti walked the meeting through the details of the reserve use plan, which shows almost all reserves used by the end of FY06. He also reviewed the O'Neill formula approach to budget cutting.

Dias then called on each selectmen and then several others for an exchange of views on what should be done. Very little was said about possible consolidations, economies, and other changes that might be considered (public property sales, consolidated human resources, closing a fire station, CPA, general override, etc.) The following was decided:

The manager and superintendent will make recommendations in two weeks on how the additional \$915m State Aid reductions recently announced for FY03 by the Governor could be accommodated.

The Board of Selectmen will appoint five task forces to address specific key budget issues: Pensions, Health insurance, State Aid, SPED residential private placements, Reserves. No specific dates were set.

Tosti stated that the Finance Committee would support this effort.

PUBLIC HEARING:

The meeting of the Boards was followed, after a break, by statements from citizens in the audience who had signed up to speak. Everyone on the list, about 20 people, were able to speak. Almost every speaker stated that the proposed reductions would devastate some Town service. A majority of the speakers urged the Board of Selectmen to propose an override and volunteered to work for it. Many urged the Board of Selectmen to move quickly since an override campaign takes time to organize. Several urged management reductions in order to preserve direct services.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$300,000

Peter B. Howard, Secretary

Budget & Article Action Summary

Bud #	Date of presentation	Date of vote	\$	Vote	Art#	Date of presentation	Date of vote	\$	Vote/ assigned to
1					6	2/5	postponed		
2					7				
3					10				
4					11				
5					12				
6					14				
7					15				
8					17				
9					19				Foskett
10					20	2/3	2/3		Support
11					21				
12					23				
13					26				
14					27				Foskett
15					30	2/3	postponed		
16					31	2/3	postponed		
17 a					36				
17 b					37	2/5	info req'd		
17 c					38	2/5	info req'd		
17 d					39				
17 e					42				
17 f					43				
19					44				
20					46	2/5	info req'd		
21 a					47				
21 b					48				
21 c					49				
21 d					50				
22					51				
23					52				
24					53				
25					54				
26					55				
WS					56				O'Neill
Rec					57				
Rnk					58				
CO A					59				Foskett
YS					60				DeCoursey
					61				
					62				

